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Letter dated 17 October 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report on the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Colombia in July 2012 (see annex).

The document was prepared under my responsibility, after consultation with the other members of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Néstor **Osorio**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 17 October 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English]

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Colombia (July 2012)

Introduction

Under the Presidency of Colombia in July 2012, the Security Council followed a pattern of intense activity as reflected in its programme of work. The Council considered agenda items relating to Africa, on Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Somalia, Somalia/Eritrea, the reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan, West Africa, peace and security in Africa (Mali), and the situation in Libya. The Council also discussed the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, the United Nations Supervision Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, resolution 1701 (2006) and Yemen. Regarding Europe, the Council examined issues relating to Cyprus and Kosovo. The Council also heard reports from the Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea.

The Council also held an open debate to consider post-conflict peacebuilding, and explored this issue further in the context of an informal interactive dialogue.

In the month of July the Council held 18 public meetings, 20 informal consultations, 1 interactive dialogue and 4 private meetings. The Council adopted eight resolutions and issued nine statements to the press.

Africa

The situation in Burundi

In accordance with resolution 2027 (2011), on 5 July, the Council heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB), Karin Landgren, regarding the implementation of the mandate of BNUB and resolution 2027 (2011). The Special Representative reported that since her last briefing to the Council Burundi had continued to advance strategies for critical sectors, notably by adopting its new poverty reduction strategy and by starting to implement its strategy for good governance and the fight against corruption. The Special Representative addressed the issue of the benchmarks for the eventual transition from a special political mission to a regular United Nations country team presence as requested by the Council in resolutions 1959 (2010) and 2027 (2011) (see S/2012/310). She stressed that those benchmarks and their associated indicators were formulated in consultation with the Government of Burundi, the broader United Nations country team in Burundi and the United Nations Integrated Task Force on Burundi in New York.

At the same meeting, the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Switzerland, Paul Seger, and the Permanent Representative of Burundi, Herménégilde Niyonzima, addressed the Council.

The briefing was followed by informal consultations. The members of the Council recognized the important progress made in Burundi and expressed concern regarding the fragility of some of those achievements. Council members underlined the importance of implementing the Secretary-General's benchmarks and in this regard, on 26 July, the President of the Security Council addressed a letter to the Secretary-General (S/2012/584) in which the Council expressed support for those benchmarks and looked forward to the provision by BNUB, within six months, of baseline data and assessments for each issue, including observations on timing, trends and the role of BNUB in its implementation.

Côte d'Ivoire

On 10 July, a private meeting was held at which the Council and the countries contributing troops and police forces to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) were briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire and Head of UNOCI, Albert Gerard Koenders, by teleconference.

On 18 July, the Council received the thirtieth progress report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI (S/2012/506) and heard a briefing by the Special Representative. The Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, Youssoufou Bamba, also made a statement. The Special Representative focused his briefing on progress made in the restoration of peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire since the end of the post-election crisis, the Secretary-General's recommendations for the renewal of the UNOCI mandate and the reduction of the military component of the mission. The Special Representative also mentioned the need to promote national reconciliation, and to address the underlying causes of the conflict, including the questions of land tenure and citizenship, and also to address the security situation in western Côte d'Ivoire.

The members of the Council acknowledged the positive progress on peace and stability, and stressed the need to address the underlying causes of conflict, and to address cross-border threats in western Côte d'Ivoire, including the presence of illicit arms, which could affect the reconciliation process and have a destabilizing role in the subregion. Some members called for increased cooperation between the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and UNOCI, and between countries of the region in order to effectively address common security threats. On 26 July, the Council, by resolution 2062 (2012) decided to extend the mandate of UNOCI for 12 months, until 31 July 2013. The Council also decided to endorse the Secretary-General's recommendation for a reduction of the military component of the equivalent of one battalion, and kept the police component at 1,555 personnel. The Council also authorized the transfer of three armed helicopters from UNMIL to UNOCI, and extended until 31 July 2013 the authorization provided to the French forces in order to support UNOCI. Finally, the Council authorized UNOCI to provide assistance for the forthcoming local elections to the authorities of Côte d'Ivoire.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 6 July, a press statement was adopted in which the Council condemned the attacks by the 23 March Movement (M23) on peacekeepers of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in North Kivu on 5 July, called upon the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure that the perpetrators of such attacks were swiftly brought to justice, and reiterated its demand that M23 and all armed groups immediately cease all forms of violence.

On 10 July, the Council was briefed in informal consultations by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Roger Meece, via videoconference, regarding the developments in the eastern provinces of the country, particularly in North Kivu. The Special Representative reported that the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued their operations against M23, and on the hostilities near Goma. He expressed concern at the dire humanitarian situation and the growing numbers of displaced people. He also mentioned the upcoming meeting of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, to be held on the sidelines of the African Union summit in Addis Ababa, where the situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo would be discussed, as a positive sign of regional cooperation.

The members of the Council exchanged views on the question and analysed the unfolding events, expressing concern at the deterioration of the situation and the need for a comprehensive approach to tackle the violence in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The members of the Council also highlighted the importance of cooperation among regional States, and expressed support for the activities of MONUSCO in the region.

On 16 July, the Council released a statement to the press, in which it condemned the attacks by the M23 mutineers and expressed deep concern at the sharply deteriorating situation in North Kivu Province and the worsening of the humanitarian situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Council took note with interest of the report of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Regional Interministerial Extraordinary Meeting on the Security Situation in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, held on 11 July in Addis Ababa, and urged the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to fully implement bilateral and regional mechanisms in addressing insecurity in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On 30 July, the Council held informal consultations to continue its consideration of recent events in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo particularly the situation in Rutshuru. The Special Representative briefed the Council via videoconference, and expressed concern on the deteriorating situation and the increasing actions of the M23 rebel group, affecting different regions of North Kivu. He addressed the activities and capabilities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the difficulties it faced in responding to the armed activities of the different rebel groups present in the east of the country, the role of MONUSCO and the international efforts to foster regional cooperation in support of the Government's efforts to resolve the current situation.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

On 26 July, the Council received the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (UNIOGBIS) (S/2012/554) and heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNIOGBIS, Joseph Mutaboba. The Permanent Representative of Brazil, Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, in her capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission; the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, Ambassador Youssoufou Bamba, on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); and the Permanent Representative of Mozambique, Ambassador António Gumende, on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, also participated in the meeting.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General reported on the main political developments and security situation in Guinea-Bissau since the adoption of resolution 2048 (2012) and reiterated the importance of promoting harmonized responses and finding a consensual and sustainable solution to the political crisis in Guinea-Bissau.

Council members stressed the need for the restoration of constitutional order, in line with resolution 2048 (2012), and to maintain pressure on the coup leaders. Most Council members stressed the importance of achieving an inclusive and sustainable solution acceptable to all stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau. Similarly, they reiterated their call to develop a common strategy to find an expeditious solution to the crisis by coordinating international efforts in a consistent and harmonious manner. Several members of the Council emphasized the importance of United Nations leadership.

On 30 July, the members of the Council issued a statement to the press recalling resolution 2048 (2012) and restating their demands for the full restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau, and called on all political actors and civil society to engage in a consensual, inclusive and nationally owned transition process and in a genuine dialogue. They encouraged ECOWAS and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, in collaboration with the United Nations and the African Union, to support this process.

The situation in Libya

On 2 July, the Council was briefed in informal consultations by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, regarding the human rights situation in Libya, during which she recognized progress in the country and the commitment of the national authorities to improve human rights institutions and policies and to work towards national reconciliation. Nevertheless, she expressed concern about reported cases of torture, arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial killings and discrimination. The members of the Council exchanged views on the human rights situation in the country and how the international community could better support national authorities to improve the situation.

On 10 July, the Council issued a statement to the press, in which it welcomed the holding, on 7 July 2012, of the first national elections in Libya in nearly half a century. The Council congratulated the Libyan people on this occasion and commended their peaceful participation in the process.

On 18 July, a briefing was held, during which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ian Martin, informed the Council of elections conducted in Libya on 7 July. He highlighted the extensive participation and the efforts made by the national institutions to achieve a transparent and inclusive electoral process. He also focused his presentation on future challenges, like the appointment of a new government, the adoption of the constitution, security sector reform and the strengthening of human rights institutions.

In the informal consultations which followed, Council members discussed and welcomed the results of the electoral process, and exchanged views on possible future steps to consolidate the peaceful transition in the country. Council members discussed matters related to the formation of the new government, the adoption of the constitution, security institutions, border controls, human rights and national reconciliation, among others. Some delegations expressed concern over the human rights situation and the rule of law in Libya. One delegation called on NATO to conduct an investigation into incidents which led to civilian casualties during its military operation in that country.

Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea

On 24 July, Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, presented the Committee's 120-day report. In his briefing, he referred, inter alia, to the main elements included in the final reports of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea. The Council was also briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Augustine Mahiga, on the progress made in the political process and the security situation in Somalia in the last phase of the transition.

The members of the Council agreed on the importance of implementing the road map and of ending the transition within the established deadlines. They stressed the importance of advancing the implementation of the remaining tasks, especially those related to the National Constituent Assembly, the adoption of the Constitution and the selection of members of the Somali Federal Parliament. Similarly, they recognized the need to continue to support Somalia and to adopt measures against those who undermine the peace and reconciliation process. Some members expressed concern about the continued violations of the general arms embargo reported by the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea and stressed the importance of achieving full implementation of resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) and giving due attention to the information provided by the Group with regard to the potential diversion of humanitarian aid.

On 25 July, the Council adopted resolution 2060 (2012), by which it extended the mandate of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea established pursuant to resolution 1558 (2004) for a period of 13 months, until 25 August 2013. The Council also decided to extend for a period of 12 months the humanitarian exemption to the obligations imposed on Member States in paragraph 3 of resolution 1844 (2008).

The same day, the members of the Council issued a statement to the press, in which they welcomed the progress on the road map and its associated agreements, the publication of the new draft Constitution and the selection of the 825 members of the National Constituent Assembly, which was convened on 25 July. The Council

also urged the Transitional Federal Institutions and the road map signatories to redouble their efforts to complete the road map tasks, and to show tangible progress on their commitments in a timely and effective manner. The members of the Council stressed the need for improved financial transparency and management to help lay the groundwork for better economic and social development in Somalia.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

On 3 July, the Council was briefed in informal consultations by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in the Sudan and South Sudan. The High Commissioner addressed the national shortcomings and challenges, as well as the impact of the ongoing tensions between the two countries on the enjoyment of human rights by the civilian population, including restrictions on civil and political rights and reports of violence against women and children, and limited humanitarian access.

Also on 3 July, the Council held informal consultations on the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of UNMISS, Hilde F. Johnson, briefed the Council on the eve of the first anniversary of the independence of South Sudan and the establishment of UNMISS. The Special Representative informed the Council on progress made by the Government of South Sudan, and on the implementation of the UNMISS mandate, and she also stressed critical areas where more work was required to guarantee sustainable peace in the country. The members of the Council exchanged views on the situation in South Sudan.

On 5 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2057 (2012), by which it extended the UNMISS mandate until 15 July 2013.

On 10 July, the Council held consultations on the implementation of resolution 2046 (2012). The Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, who reported that no significant hostilities had arisen and that the inflammatory rhetoric had decreased, and stated that the situation remained tense between the two countries. He also said that progress had been obtained, as the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee had agreed the terms of reference for the Joint Military Observer Committee, emphasizing that all mechanisms and decisions included in the Agreement of 20 June 2011 must be implemented. He also said that the two countries had committed themselves to immediately deploy their national monitors to the temporary headquarters of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism in Assosa, Ethiopia, although the deployment had not yet occurred.

The members of the Council recognized the progress made but they reiterated their concern regarding the slow implementation of the African Union road map and resolution 2046 (2012). They also stressed the need for the prompt establishment of the safe demilitarized border zone and the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism.

On 18 July, a private meeting was held at which the Council and the countries contributing troops and police forces to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) received a briefing by the Director of the Africa I Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Margaret Carey.

On 24 July, the Council held a briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on UNAMID (S/2012/548). The Joint Special Representative of the African Union and the United Nations, Ibrahim Gambari, briefed the Council on the situation in Darfur and the implementation of the mandate of UNAMID. He highlighted recent key developments related to the political and security situation in the region, particularly the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. In the informal consultations that followed the briefing, the members of the Council exchanged views on the situation in Darfur and analysed the unfolding events.

On 26 July, the Council was briefed in informal consultations by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan, Haile Menkerios, on recent developments in the implementation of resolution 2046 (2012). He described the ongoing negotiations within the time frame established in the resolution, and said that the negotiators had been focused on security issues, although steps had been taken on the other pending issues. The Council members stressed the importance of the achievements made so far, and the need to secure progress in the implementation of all elements of resolution 2046 (2012).

On 31 July, the Council adopted resolution 2063 (2012), by which it extended the UNAMID mandate for an additional period of 12 months. The resolution was adopted by 14 votes, with 1 abstention.

Peace and security in Africa (Mali)

On 5 July, the Council, under the item "Peace and security in Africa", unanimously adopted resolution 2056 (2012) regarding the situation in Mali, in which it addressed different aspects of the current crisis in the country, including the restoration of constitutional order and the threats to Mali's territorial integrity, while expressing full support to all efforts made by the transitional authorities of Mali, with the support of ECOWAS, the African Union, neighbouring and other countries in the region and the United Nations to resolve the country's multiple challenges.

West Africa

On 11 July, the Council received the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) for the period from 1 January to 30 June 2012 (S/2012/510) and heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOWA, Said Djinnit. The Council was also briefed by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Yuri Fedotov. The Special Representative referred to the fragile situation in the subregion, given the political instability in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, as well as the precarious security situation and the need to address cross-border and cross-cutting threats. He referred to the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the broader Sahel region and stressed the need to develop a common and comprehensive strategy on the region.

The Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reported that transnational organized crime and illicit drug trafficking had increased in West Africa. He indicated that West Africa was no longer exclusively a transit route of illicit drugs to Europe and other regions, but had also become a final destination. He considered it necessary to allocate more resources to prevention and treatment for drug users, and expressed his concern with the growing threats of terrorism, piracy and other criminal activities in the region.

The Council members acknowledged the fragile and precarious situation affecting the subregion, and expressed concern about possible setbacks on recent peace and stability gains. Several members affirmed the importance of continuing to strengthen national capacities to address cross-border threats through regional initiatives. Several members urged UNOWA to continue supporting countries in the region during elections to be held in 2012. They also expressed concern over the deteriorating humanitarian and security situation in the Sahel, and called for the adoption of a comprehensive strategy to address these challenges.

Europe

United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

On 5 July, a private meeting was held at which the Council and the countries contributing troops and police forces to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) received a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNFICYP, Lisa Buttenheim.

On 10 July, the Council held closed consultations to examine the report of the Secretary-General concerning UNFICYP (S/2012/507). The Special Representative and the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, Alexander Downer, briefed the Council by videoconference. The Special Representative stressed that active engagement by both sides with UNFICYP on military confidence-building measures could improve the security situation, and she stressed the need to avoid the re-emergence of tension, particularly in relation to the recent discovery of energy resources off the coast of Cyprus. While noting that the situation in the buffer zone remained calm and stable, she expressed concern at the continuing threat posed by mines in Cyprus, and recalled that there was no official ceasefire. The Special Adviser reported that there was no agreement between the parties on the way forward in the negotiating process, and that the Turkish Cypriots had expressed the view that, while Cyprus presided over the European Union, there would be no guarantees that the dialogue would continue. He reported that the technical committees had come back into activity willingly and that both parties had appointed their respective focal points for each topic.

Council members welcomed the resumption of activities of the technical committees; they recognized the importance of advancements in demining. They welcomed the important role of UNFICYP on the ground, and supported the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend its mandate.

On 19 July, the Council adopted resolution 2058 (2012), by which it extended the United Nations peacekeeping presence in Cyprus until 31 January 2013. The resolution was adopted by 13 votes, with 2 abstentions.

United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

On 17 July, the Council held closed consultations on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations informed the Council about some violent events reported by the international press, including a violent act on 6 July which resulted in the assassination of a Serbian couple that had recently returned to Kosovo. The members of the Council deplored those violent acts and expressed confidence that

the authorities would investigate swiftly and fully the incident to identify and bring to justice those responsible. They also regretted alleged incidents of ethnic violence and acknowledged that those incidents contributed to greater tensions. The Council agreed on the importance of having detailed and reliable information of events on the ground.

Terrorist attack in Bulgaria

On 19 July, the President of the Security Council issued a statement to the press, condemning in the strongest terms the terrorist attack that occurred in Bulgaria on 18 July causing several deaths and numerous injuries to Israeli and Bulgarian citizens. The members of the Council reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. They reiterated their determination to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with the Council's responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations, and they underlined the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of this reprehensible act of terrorism to justice.

Asia

The situation concerning Iraq

On 19 July, the Council was briefed at an open meeting by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Martin Kobler. He introduced to the Council the third report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2001 (2011) (S/2012/535). The Permanent Representative of Iraq also participated in the meeting. In his remarks, the Special Representative highlighted the key role played by the United Nations Mission in Iraq, stressing that there is still much to be done to improve the political, economic and social situation in Iraq. He also commended Iraq's progress over the past year, but advised that the political stalemate could hamper progress in the country's development. On Camp Ashraf, he expressed concern about the delay in the relocation of its residents to Camp Hurriya, prior to their resettlement to third countries. He urged the Camp Ashraf residents to cooperate with the Iraqi authorities and to relocate. He also called on Member States to offer resettlement to eligible former Camp Ashraf residents.

The Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations, Ambassador Hamid al-Bayati, stated that the Iraqi authorities continued to make intensive efforts to resolve the current political deadlock, and were seeking to bridge the diverse political views and avoid discrimination. Concerning Iraq's remaining obligations related to Kuwait in compliance with Security Council resolutions, he said that his country remained committed to settling all unresolved issues with Kuwait, through friendly relations and negotiations.

During the closed consultations that followed, Council members exchanged views on the situation in Iraq and the extension of the mandate of UNAMI. They described as fragile the overall political situation in Iraq, reiterated that the National Conference must be convened as soon as possible, and pointed out that security continued to be a big challenge to be addressed.

On 25 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2061 (2012), by which it extended the UNAMI mandate for one year.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 2 July, the Council was briefed in closed consultations by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. She described the situation as critical and deplored the continuing use of helicopters and heavy artillery against civilians. She complained that the Syrian Arab Red Crescent had faced difficulties in providing humanitarian assistance to those who needed it most. She also denounced the arbitrary arrest and detention of several thousand persons by the Government as well as kidnapping and abducting civilians and security personnel, and other forms of human rights abuses and violations.

On 10 July, a private meeting was held at which the Council and the countries contributing troops and police forces to the United Nations Supervision Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic (UNSMIS) received a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

On 11 July, the Council held closed consultations at which the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Kofi Annan, briefed the Council via videoconference. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations also briefed the Council.

The Joint Special Envoy called for joint and sustained pressure by the Council on the parties and the possibility of consequences for non-compliance. Concerning the outcome of the Action Group meeting held in Geneva on 30 June, he said that the Group called for comprehensive implementation of the six-point plan and resolutions 2042 (2012) and 2043 (2012) and urged all parties to recommit themselves to a sustained cessation of armed violence in all its forms immediately and without waiting for the actions of others. The Group had also agreed on the "principles and guidelines for a Syrian-led transition", and that any transition should include a transitional governing body built on the basis of mutual consent with full executive powers aimed at creating a neutral environment where a transition could take place. He urged everyone to work together to ensure the full commitment of the parties in word and deed. He referred to his visit to the region. In Damascus he addressed matters directly to President Bashir al-Assad. While in Tehran he consulted with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He also visited Iraq. He expressed his intention to continue further regional consultations, including with Saudi Arabia. He also informed the Council that the Deputy Joint Special Envoy, Nasser Al-Kidwa, attended a meeting of the opposition groups in Cairo.

The Under-Secretary-General presented the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2043 (2012). He indicated that the parties continued to pursue a military response to the crisis. Consequently the effectiveness of UNSMIS would need to be reviewed. On 15 June, UNSMIS suspended its activities, owing to an intensification of armed violence across the Syrian Arab Republic which limited its ability to carry out its mandate. The Under-Secretary-General said that, on the basis of UNSMIS experience to date and in the context of large-scale violence on the ground, the Secretary-General recommended a mission that would focus on activities useful in building support for the Joint Special Envoy's efforts. It would be redeployed to Damascus. A reduced military observer

component would support civilian-led activities and conduct visits to incident sites to carry out fact-finding and verification tasks.

Members of the Council referred to the Action Group meeting in Geneva and its final communiqué. Two draft resolutions were introduced.

On 19 July, a draft text (S/2012/538), submitted by France, Germany, Portugal, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, was not adopted owing to the negative votes of two permanent members. The text received 11 votes in favour and 2 against, with 2 abstentions.

On 20 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2059 (2012), by which it renewed the mandate of UNSMIS for a final period of 30 days, called upon the parties to ensure the safety of UNSMIS personnel and expressed its willingness to renew the mandate of UNSMIS thereafter only in the event that the Secretary-General reported and the Security Council confirmed the cessation of the use of heavy weapons and a reduction in violence by all sides sufficient to allow UNSMIS to fulfil its mandate.

On 2 July, the Council held closed consultations and was briefed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and Gaza. She mentioned that Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip, which had entered its sixth year, was causing severe limitations on basic rights, had nearly eliminated prospects for Gaza's economic development and had created an unnecessary dependency on humanitarian assistance. At the same time, she condemned the indiscriminate rocket firing from Gaza as a blatant violation of international law. Regarding the steady expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, she indicated that such actions were clearly prohibited by international law. She expressed concern regarding violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers against Palestinians and their property. She referred to discriminatory policies such as two separate legal systems, two separate infrastructures and a series of movement restrictions that apply only to Palestinians. She pointed out that the treatment and conditions of Palestinians imprisoned or detained by Israel merited attention from the international community.

Some members of the Council condemned the expansion of Israeli settlements as illegal under international law, and some also condemned the firing of rockets from Gaza. Some members of the Council expressed the urgent need for a genuine dialogue between the parties.

On 25 July, the Council held the quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Robert Serry, briefed the Council on recent developments in the region. He indicated that June was characterized by quiet direct exchanges between the parties in an attempt to reach agreement on a package of measures that would create an environment conducive to restarting talks and pave the way for high-level contacts. He said that Quartet envoys had remained in close contact with each other and the parties and that there had been a number of high-level visits. He expressed his concern over new settlement announcements since this represented a further violation of Israel's obligations under the road map. The Special Coordinator advised that time was running out for the establishment of a Palestinian State living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel. He encouraged the parties to make

every effort to overcome obstacles and take the necessary steps to enable an environment conducive to serious engagement.

Referring to regional events, the Special Coordinator reiterated his concerns about the violence in the Syrian Arab Republic and the rising death toll, and also the continuing human rights abuses and growing humanitarian needs. He recalled that on 19 July 2012 the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had reported incursions and operations of armed Syrian security forces inside the area of operation of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, noting that these actions violated the Agreement of Disengagement between the Israeli and Syrian forces. He mentioned several incidents in different parts of Lebanon linked directly or indirectly to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. He welcomed the commitment of the country's leaders to safeguarding Lebanon from the impact of regional tensions.

The members of the Council, the Permanent Observer of Palestine, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel, the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and 22 more delegations took part in the debate.

Member States stressed the importance of resuming Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and negotiations. Some members condemned the construction of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Certain members called for vigorous diplomatic action to attain lasting peace in the region based on a two-State solution, and building upon previous agreements and obligations. Various members emphasized the Quartet's role in supporting the parties in their efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Yemen

On 17 July, the Council was briefed during closed consultations by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen, Jamal Benomar. He presented the first report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolutions 2051 (2012) and 2014 (2011). He indicated that the situation remained highly complex, owing mainly to a grave humanitarian situation, an insurgency extending its control in the north, growing separatist trends and associated armed groups in the south, and the growing threat of terrorist groups.

He expressed concern over the challenges facing the political transition as a result of differences among the parties. He underlined that national unity would work only if all parties in the transition agreement were ready to leave their differences behind and work together towards a common goal. He said that the Transition Agreement reached in November 2011 outlined four major steps, namely, (1) an inclusive preparatory process for a national dialogue conference; (2) the holding of a national dialogue; (3) the translation of the results of the dialogue into a new constitution; and (4) the holding of general elections under the new constitution.

Members of the Council commended the efforts of the Special Adviser. They also concurred that the situation in Yemen still posed serious challenges to peace and security in the region. They praised efforts made by the Government of Yemen, in particular by President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, that had led to significant gains against Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula.

Resolution 1701 (2006): United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

On 17 July, the Council was briefed in informal consultations by the Special Coordinator of the Secretary-General for Lebanon, Derek Plumbly, and by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

The Special Coordinator emphasized the important role that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) played in maintaining the calm along the Blue Line. He stressed that Palestinian commemoration events, which in past years were marked by serious incidents, were conducted peacefully. He pointed out that the Israel Defense Forces continued their occupation of part of the village of Ghajar and the adjacent area north of the Blue Line, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). He underlined that there were isolated obstructions to the freedom of movement of UNIFIL, which on one occasion (10 April) had endangered the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel, causing minor injuries to one UNIFIL staff member. He stressed the need for all parties to fully respect the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Lebanon, in accordance with resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006).

Council members welcomed the initiative taken by President Michel Sleiman of reconvening the National Dialogue. They also commended his efforts and those of other leaders from across the political spectrum to control any political or sectarian tension that might affect Lebanon because of the ongoing crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. Some members stressed the need for all parties to fully respect the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Lebanon.

After the meeting, the Council issued a statement to the press in which it emphasized the need to move forward on all outstanding issues in implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and other relevant resolutions. The members welcomed President Sleiman's initiative in reconvening the National Dialogue and looked forward to the continuation of this process. They underlined the importance of full respect for Lebanon's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity and the authority of the Lebanese State in accordance with Security Council resolutions.

Afghanistan

On 23 July, the Council issued a statement to the press welcoming the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan held on 8 July and its conclusions (see S/2012/532). The Council commended the notable progress achieved by Afghanistan with the steadfast support of the international community in the past years and reiterated its support for the decision agreed in Bonn to implement a decade of transformation (2015-2024), during which Afghanistan would consolidate its sovereignty through strengthening a fully functioning, sustainable State in the service of its people. The members of the Council, recognizing the challenges ahead for Afghanistan, welcomed the generous pledges totalling over $16 billion until 2015, made by the international community during the Tokyo Conference. The members of the Council also welcomed the adoption of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework in which the Government of Afghanistan and the international community reaffirmed their mutual commitments. The members of the Council also recognized the increasing role of the neighbouring and regional countries, as well as new partners for sustainable development of Afghanistan and the entire region.

Thematic and other issues

Post-conflict peacebuilding

On 12 July, the Council held an open debate on "Post-conflict peacebuilding" to consider the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its fifth session (S/2012/70) and as an opportunity to assess progress and challenges and to identify the potentials of undertaking the Commission's three core functions, namely political accompaniment, advocacy and support; resource mobilization; and fostering coherence. The debate was presided by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Maria Angela Holguin Cuéllar. A concept paper prepared by Colombia was distributed as document S/2012/511. The Council was briefed by the Secretary-General, who highlighted important achievements of the Peacebuilding Commission and the six existing configurations, as well as challenges that still remained. He also noted that the Commission should use its unique composition as an intergovernmental body to mobilize resources and focus on actions aimed at strengthening long-term peacebuilding, and should contribute to reinforcing the international commitment to the countries concerned. He also emphasized the need for Member States to support the Peacebuilding Fund.

The Council was also briefed by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, Abulkalam Abdul Momen; the former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Rwanda, Eugène-Richard Gasana; and the Vice-President and Head of Network Operations, Policy and Country Services of the World Bank, Joachim von Amsberg.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia stated that the Commission had an enormous potential to create mechanisms and modalities to promote knowledge and experience-sharing and also as a platform of technical assistance provision. Likewise, it should also channel dialogue between the different national actors and the United Nations system. She indicated that strengthening national institutions is critical to achieve sustainable results to ensure sustainable peacebuilding activities based on the principle of national ownership, giving particular attention to building institutions and capacities, and promoting South-South cooperation. She highlighted the role of international financial institutions and regional banks working to stimulate recovery and building the social economic and financial structures of countries in transition to peace.

More than 41 speakers made statements. Council members proposed a number of improvements, including enhanced coordination efforts among Member States, the United Nations and international financial institutions; and bolstering the peacebuilding architecture and financing mechanisms.

Informal interactive dialogue

Following the open debate on post-conflict peacebuilding, on 13 July the Council held an interactive dialogue. It was attended by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, Abulkalam Abdul Momen; the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman; the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous; a representative of the Peacebuilding Support Office, Ejeviome Otobo; the Chairs of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (Permanent Representative of Switzerland), the Guinea configuration (Permanent Representative

of Luxembourg), the Guinea-Bissau configuration (Permanent Representative of Brazil), the Liberia configuration (Permanent Representative of Sweden) and the Sierra Leone configuration (Permanent Representative of Canada); the representative of Japan, in his capacity as Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned of the Peacebuilding Commission; and the representatives of Burundi, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone.

The interactive dialogue was centred on the questions how the work of the Peacebuilding Commission could be more effective, and what the Security Council could do to obtain this objective. While national ownership was recognized as the fundamental principle of peacebuilding efforts, there was a lively debate regarding the different proposals to meet the Commission's full potential and to bring all partners together around common strategies. Some of the elements recognized by participants included the need for sustained commitment of a broad range of relevant global actors; strong political accompaniment and advocacy; a clear division of tasks among the United Nations system and international partners; and the need for innovative means of funding and support, namely the enhancement of South-South cooperation. The Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission announced that he would prepare a summary of the discussion and submit it to the Council for further analysis and consideration.

Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions

On 19 July, following informal consultations at expert level held on 6 July, the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions presented an oral report to the Council concerning the question of mandates and reporting cycles. The information included the Chair's own assessment as to ways of improving the existing situation, as well as certain recommendations.

The role of courts and tribunals in the fight against impunity

On 5 July, the Council issued a statement to the press on the role of the courts and tribunals in combating impunity. The Council recalled the contribution of the ad hoc and mixed tribunals, the International Criminal Court, and the chambers in national tribunals in the fight against impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. In this regard, the Council welcomed the commencement on 1 July 2012 of the functioning of the Arusha Branch of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, and emphasized that the establishment of the Mechanism pursuant to resolution 1966 (2010) was essential to ensure that the closure of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia did not leave the door open to impunity for the remaining fugitives and for those whose trials or appeals have not been completed. The members of the Council reiterated the importance of States' cooperation with those courts and tribunals in accordance with their respective obligations.